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the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 5 Fifteenth Year February 6, 1948

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Christian Appeal for World Peace

The Christian Churches in Czechoslovakia have issued an Appeal for World Peace. In this action the following Churches have united: the Roman Catholic Church (led by Archbishop Beran of Prague), the Orthodox Church (led by the Archbishop of Prague, Exarch of the Patriarchate of Moscow, the Czechoslovak Church, the Old Catholic Church, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, the Lutheran Church in Slovakia, the Reformed Church in Slovakia, the Unity of Czech Brethren, the Moravian Church, the Baptist Church and the Methodist Church.

The appeal was launched at a meeting held in Prague on February 2nd. It was crowded and proved a great success. Members of the Government were present. The appeal was favourably received by radio and the press. Speeches were delivered by the Roman Catholic Archbishop and the Lutheran Bishop of Slovakia. The appeal was read by Professor Bednar (Czech Bretren). Such cooperation has not been experienced in Czechoslovakia for over 300 years.

The appeal begins by emphasising the necessity of cooperation among the nations against the irresponsible crime of war. "Here, in the heart of Europe, we experience more than other nations the conflicts and interpenetrations of contemporary ideological, social, cultural and political systems. We thank God that we, here in this place, this highly exposed spot in the world, are able to express our attitude towards them, not only as citizens of a free Republic, but also as members of the human family, and above all as Christians, assured of human, civil, political and religious freedom...

"Reminding ourselves of the Christian character and humanitarian ideals of our history, and in their spirit, we ask the whole Czechoslovak public, and especially its leaders... to be conscious of their responsibility for every word they utter. Today the future of the nations is at stake. Even though, as a small nation, we are not able to decide the great questions of international policy, we can nevertheless set an example for the world by the way in which, in our own small sphere, we resolve world problems... Our historical experiences, our social and political structure, and our culture predestine us to work for the

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rapprochement and cooperation of differing world systems in the spirit of democracy and social justice."

The appeal is then addressed to the Christians of the world: "World peace can only be assured by common action of the nations. Therefore we appeal to the Christian conscience of the world. Despite theological differences, we are all children of one Father, of our Creator and Lord, we all confess the redeeming action of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, who belongs to all generations of humanity, and we all feel the common obligation of all Christians to free ourselves from the barriers dividing nations and social classes and to work for the brotherhood of all..."

Speaking to the statesmen of the world, the message states that the Christian Churches of the Czechoslovak Republic regard it as their duty to inform the United Nations about the convictions which prevail among all of them. "The greatest obstacle to cooperation", it says, "is suspicion among the nations, culminating in the fear of a sudden attack. We therefore ask:

a) that statesmen take as a psychological and spiritual basis for the negotiations the determined and, for statesmen, binding desire of the nations to live in peace and tranquility;

b) that the difficulty of solving concrete international problems be not permitted to hinder the final goal of international negotiations, which must be respected, and which is world peace;

c) that the idea of the United Nations as an organ to secure peace be not neglected or destroyed;

d) that in this field... the voice of Christianity be heard as a creative participant in the question of peace, divorced from all political interests..."

E.P.S.Geneva

Study Conference in Geneva, Jan.24-29

In connection with the discussions of the Administrative Committee of the World Council of Churches, and with the other preparations for the General Assembly at Amsterdam (see E.P.S. No. 4) meetings of the Study Commissions were held in Geneva from January 24 to 27. These four preparatory Commissions are responsible for the publication of four international volumes, which will deal with the general theme "Man's Disorder and God's Design" under the four following headings:

I. The Universal Church in God's Design - II. The Church's Witness to God's Design - III. The Church and the Disorder of Society - IV. The Church and International Affairs.

Papers for inclusion in these volumes have already been sent in by authors from all over the world, these papers being the outcome of extensive international study and discussion. In this way an unusual international study-process has been carried on during the last few months.

The papers destined for these volumes were subjected to final revision and will go to press on March 1st, so as to be in the delegates' hands before

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the General Assembly. Concrete proposals are to be presented to the Assembly, and the discussion on this question is still continuing.

These meetings were followed on January 28 and 29, by a conference of study leaders from the different European countries, who are taking part in the study preparations for Amsterdam. These discussions were attended by delegates from 15 European countries and 2 from the United States. The reports which were presented to the conference showed that there is a lively interest in all countries in the forthcoming Assembly. This interest is expressed in various ways and in all kinds of different organisations. In a number of countries special national volumes will discuss the problems to be dealt with at Amsterdam. A number of popular books and leaflets are already available, which are bringing these problems before a wider circle. Conferences are being arranged in many places at which study circles meet with delegates from the Churches. In one country the subject of Commission II (Evangelism) has been made the central theme for the sessions of all the synods of one Church.

The conference enabled delegates to exchange all their plans and experiences, and proved extremely valuable. E.P.S. Geneva

YUGOSLAVIA Church Reconstruction

"Aid to Orthodox and Protestant theological seminaries and students, provision of food and clothing and books, and rehabilitation of priests, are among the greatest needs of the Yugoslavian Churches", stated the Rev. Robert Tobias, staff member of the Reconstruction Department of the World Council of Churches after his recent visit to Yugoslavia. While there, Mr. Tobias had the opportunity to talk with high church and government leaders and to visit many church institutions and reconstruction projects.

"One can well understand the difficulty of supplying Churches with adequate leadership", Mr. Tobias states. "Five hundred and eighty Orthodox priests were killed during the war. No students were trained for priesthood during the five years of fighting, and there exists now only one pre-seminary training school for church leaders". In speaking of the one theological seminary in Belgrade, Mr. Tobias noted that the original Faculty building which served as a residence hall, study and administrative centre was completely demolished by bombing; the second students' centre is being used as a home for diseased children, and the library which formerly had 20,000 volumes has been reduced to 8,000. In some classes, 20 to 30 students must share four or five texts. During an informal meeting with the professors of the seminary, expression of gratitude was expressed for the money sent for priests and theological professors. Mr. Tobias said, "they were greatly encourage by the prospect of renewed contacts with seminaries and Christians of other countries."

In Feketic, Mr. Tobias had an opportunity to visit the deaconess orphanage of the Protestant Church. Before the war the orphanage accomodated 45 children, but because of the recent lack of food and fuel it has been necessary to send all but 12 children to neighbouring families. "Their greatest need is for fuel, shoes, clothing and food", he said.

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In Belgrade, Mr. Tobias had an opportunity to visit the headquarters of the Protestant Church. Prior to the war the church accommodated 45 pastors, but because of the recent lack of food and fuel it has been necessary to send all but 12 ministers to agricultural districts, "where pastors need to look for fuel, shoes, clothing and food", he said.

Speaking of the total church programme, Mr. Tobias said that the Churches "are full and the people indicate a great interest in religious affairs. Every evidence points to the fact that the Churches and people enjoy freedom of worship and belief". Mr. Tobias indicated the severity of the difficulties which the Church is facing, due to war losses and to the discontinuance of financial support following the separation of Church and State.

"There is evidence of new life coming from the roots up". To illustrate this, he pointed out that several months ago some village priests of destroyed areas, who were actively engaged in the rebuilding of the total community structure on a new basis, contacted priests in other villages to share their ideas and experiences. Later, priests in Serbia and other republics were contacted, resulting last December in a conference of 300 priests who gathered in Belgrade for serious consideration of what work priests should perform and what their responsibility is in the life of their communities (see E.P.S. No. 3).

"The government's attitude toward church life as expressed by General Ljubodrag Djuric, first secretary to Marshal Tito and head of the newly formed Commission on Religious Affairs, is one of interested concern", reported Mr. Tobias. "Not only does the government welcome outside aid through the World Council of Churches as an expression of the goodwill and fellowship of Christians in other lands but also offered to provide facilities through their Commission on Religious Affairs to insure the safe arrival of goods at their destination.

General Djuric emphasised that while the first responsibility of the priests is in the realm of spiritual affairs, the government hopes that church leaders, particularly in the villages will play an increasingly prominent rôle in the education of illiterates, in cultural activities, organising cooperatives and in humanitarian works. "The Churches have a very significant rôle and ought to perform it side by side with the government. Both the people and the government are concerned that the Churches shall continue to exist and properly perform their responsibilities."

In describing briefly the situation of the total country, Mr. Tobias said that despite the war devastation, lack of much basic equipment, and last summer's drought, the people have accomplished more with less available resources than any other country he has visited. "Their efforts at rebuilding are remarkable", he said. "Even the small villages are almost completely restored. The people are working with a noble determination, a new sense of self-confidence, vision and purpose which is most admirable." E.P.S. Geneva

Preparations for Amsterdam

In an article under this heading in our issue No. 4 (Jan. 30) a mistake was made in the statement as to official allotments of seats for the Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The reference to 25 delegates from the Churches of South America and Australasia should read 25 from the Churches of South Africa and Australasia. Latin America (and not only Central America) is grouped with Asia, Africa and the Pacific Islands, and to this group 50 places are allotted. E.P.S.Geneva

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HUNGARY — Suspension of Broadcasting of Church Services

In Hungary the broadcasting of church services has been suspended. The Protestant weekly paper, "Uj Harangszo", reports on this new venture as follows:

"Already during the armistice negotiations were opened between the Radio Association and the church leaders. The Radio Association insisted that the sermons which were broadcast should be submitted to censorship beforehand. The Church, however, maintained that sermons - especially those preached in the pulpit - cannot be subjected to the approval of a secular body. The Church refused to allow the sermons to be censored in this way. On the other hand the Church expressed its willingness to have the sermons examined beforehand by the Protestant Bishops - a proposal which was rejected by the Radio directors."

On January 4, 1948 a notice was read in the churches in Budapest, stating that the broadcasting of church services had been suspended. The same applies to the Roman Catholic Church. E.P.S. Geneva

SWITZERLAND — Joint Appeal for Missionary Purposes

At the suggestion of the Swiss Evangelical Missionary Council, a collection was taken in all the cantonal Churches during the year 1947, in aid of the special post-war task of missions. The total amount collected was 225,552 Swiss francs. It was handed over to the missionary societies, special preference being given to the smaller enterprises. Dr E. Kellerhals, of Basle, writes as follows:

"This action has been welcomed for two reasons. In the first place because the official Church has thereby recognised the missionary task incumbent upon the Church, even when it is carried out by societies which are organisationally independent of the Church. Secondly, because for the first time the nine societies included in the Swiss Evangelical Missionary Council have made a joint appeal to the Churches, so that instead of competing with one another the missionary societies now recognise the unity of their task. For the missionary societies the additional collections mean a welcome contribution to their heavy post-war expenses and to reconstruction in the mission field, especially as a number of Swiss missionary societies had to take over the responsibility - either partly or wholly - for so-called 'Orphaned Missions'." E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES — The Council of Churches and the Marshall Plan

The Executive Committee of the Federal Council of Churches, at its meeting held at Atlanta on January 14, 1948, endorsed the Marshall Plan as "one of history's most momentous affirmations of faith".

While completely endorsing the Marshall Plan, the committee warned that the motives and objectives behind the programme "should be essentially moral and spiritual and above political partisanship". It said the United States must not use the programme to make over Europe in its political or economic image but that "it must be an expression of confidence in the peoples of Europe who have been making earnest efforts at self-help."

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"The European Recovery Programme must be the means by which Europe and the world are released from fears that the United States will seek to fashion them politically and economically and freed from the shackles they impose."

The Executive Committee of the Federal Council of Churches also urged the immediate adoption of legislation permitting 100,000 displaced persons to enter the United States in each of the next four years. E.P.S. Geneva

Death of Pastor Merle d'Aubigné

The death of Pastor Charles Merle d'Aubigné at the age of 87, leaves another empty place among the pioneers of the ecumenical movement. Since the beginnings of the Faith and Order Movement he was among its leaders and for many years a member of its Executive Committee. E.PS. Geneva

UNITED STATES — Plan of the American Bible Society for 1948

The budget of the American Bible Society for 1948 amounts to $2,981,645. Heading the list of nations to benefit from the help of the Society are Germany and Japan. In both cases the Society is sending as much help as possible in the form of raw materials which will be manufactured into Bibles and Testaments in these two countries. By this means the people themselves play a large part in the production of their own Bibles and they also benefit from the fact that they are able to produce a greater quantity of Scriptures than if the Bible Society was to spend the same amount of money in sending finished Bibles.

On the occasion of the visit of Metropolitan Gregory of Leningrad and Novgorod to New York in October 1947, the American Bible Society offered to send to the U.S.S.R. 116,000 copies of the Scriptures in Russian from the limited stock available. This offer was accepted with gratitude. Metropolitan Gregory indicated that, if further supplies of Scriptures could be shipped during 1948, they would be most welcome. The American Bible Society is therefore proposing to publish during the course of this year 200,000 Bibles, over half a million New Testaments and a million Gospels in Russian. E.P.S. Geneva

INDIA — First Council of the Mysore Diocese

The first Council of the newly-formed diocese of Mysore, in the Church of South India, was held in Bangalore from January 6 to 9, under the presidency of the Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Premaka Gurushanta. About 200 representatives of the parishes, pastorates and institutions of the diocese were present.

"The Guardian" (London, January 30, 1948) gives the following details on this event: "The new diocese is made up from parts of the old Anglican diocese of Madras, from the Kanarese areas of the London Mission, and from the whole Mysore district of the Methodist Church. The baptised Christians, numbering between 30 and 40,000, include Kanarese and Tamils, Badagas and Todas, Americans, Anglo-Indians and British, and represent all the traditions of churchmanship gathered in the South Indian Union.

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The Council, opening each day with Holy Communion, spent the first sessions in making its members acquainted with one another. Representatives of each section outlined the history, purpose, achievements and present circumstances of their part of the Church... There was keen interest in the hearing of the traditions and methods of the different Communions and it is certain that great advance was made in the process of growing together.

The Council was reminded that, by the inauguration of union, the new diocese had come into being wholly and simply in Christ and was, as yet, without any organisation or machinery of administration. Hence most of the remaining time was given to the urgent and difficult task of providing them... A draft constitution was fully debated and, after some amendments, unanimously accepted... A resolution was unanimously approved committing the diocese, at its outset, to the winning for Christ of the un-evangelised areas within its bounds, and steps were taken to give immediate effect to this intention in the support of a diocesan missionary society..." E.P.S. Geneva

JAPAN — Establishment of a Christian University

With the opening of a seminary in the temporary headquarters of the YMCA in Tokyo the establishment of a Christian university in Japan has become more of a reality. Leading Christian scholars in Japan have been appointed to the faculty. In addition to regular courses in biology, chemistry, economics, law, philosophy, physics, and theology, special lectures will be given on the Bible, Christian ethics, Christian doctrine. E.P.S. Geneva

GREAT BRITAIN — Lenten Campaign for London

A year ago, by concerted action, the Churches went to the people in the Commando Campaign. Now the people will be called to "Come to the Church". The invitation will be to attend church on six Sundays during Lent. This is not the old, smooth suggestion, "come to Church", but a sharp challenge from the people who do attend church services and find in them spiritual food, ethical guidance and human fellowship.

The appeal will reach the public in two forms. First, posters will be shown outside the combining Churches bearing the arresting heading, "The Church's Challenge". The letterpress will assert that "it is unfair to condemn the Church without knowing the facts". "Before you criticise", it will add, "learn what the Churches are doing and what they teach". The second form in which the invitation will reach the public will be through Church members. E.P.S. Geneva

INDIA:- Raja Sir Maharaj Singh has been appointed Governor of Bombay Province in succession to Sir John Colville, who has resigned on January 6, 1948. Sir Maharaj Singh, who is Chairman of the National Council of the Y.M.C.A. of India, Burma and Ceylon, and a leader of the Christian community in India, recently returned to India from the United States, where he had gone as member of the Indian Delegation to the United Nations Assembly. He was for some time Indian Agent-General in South Africa and also led the recent Indian Delegation to East Africa. He was a delegate to the Commonwealth Relations Conference in London in 1945. E.P.S. Geneva

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<u>London Campaign for London</u>

A year ago, by concerted action, the Churches went to the people in the Command Campaign. Now the people will be called to "come to the Church". The invitation will be to attend church on six Sundays during Lent. This is not the old, smooth suggestion, "come to Church", but a sharp challenge from the people who do attend church services and find in them spiritual food, ethical guidance and human fellowship.

The appeal will reach the public in two forms. First, posters will be shown outside the cinemas during the current feature, "The Chuvale's Challenge". The lettering will assert that it is unfair to condemn the Church without knowing the facts. "Before you criticise", it will ask, "learn what the Churches are doing and what they teach". The second form is a film of the invitation with which the public will see "Foreign Church Service".

E.P.S. Geneva

INDIA:- Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar has been appointed Governor of Madras Province in succession to Sir John Colville, who has resigned on January 6, 1949. Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, who is Chairman of the National Council of the I.M.C.A. of India, Burma and Ceylon, and a leader of the Christian community in India, recently returned to India from the United States, where he had been as member of the Indian Delegation to the United Nations Assembly. He was for some time Indian Agent-General in South Africa and also has served Indian Delegation to East Africa. He was a delegate to the Commonwealth Relations Conference in London in 1945.

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